

DNREC Division of Fish & Wildlife seeks volunteers to help nesting diamondback terrapins along the Bayshore

Training to be held May 19

DOVER – DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife is seeking volunteers to help diamondback terrapins at a prominent nesting location where they come ashore to lay eggs, Port Mahon Road near Little Creek along the Delaware Bayshore. Optional volunteer training will be offered from 10:30 a.m. to noon, Sunday, May 19 at the Kent County Hunter Education Training Center at the Little Creek Wildlife Area, 3018 Bayside Drive, Dover, DE 19901. Light refreshments will be provided. An optional site visit to Port Mahon Road will follow the training.

Diamondback terrapins are a turtle species iconic to Delaware's Bayshore, Inland Bays, and tidal creeks, spending their lives in brackish waters except when female terrapins leave the water to lay eggs each spring. At the peak of nesting season, hundreds of terrapin heads can be seen in the water off Port Mahon before female terrapins come ashore to lay their eggs when tide, temperature, and humidity conditions are right.

Port Mahon Road borders the Delaware Bay and is often flooded with water and debris during high tides and storm events. Large rocks are located along sections of Port Mahon Road for needed erosion protection. Terrapins can become trapped in these obstacles, and terrapins impeded from returning to the bay by the rocks after laying eggs are vulnerable to being hit by cars.

Efforts are underway to develop a solution that would allow unimpeded terrapin passage at Port Mahon Road, but until such time, volunteers are needed to help terrapins on their nesting journey by rescuing those caught in the rocks or helping them safely cross the road. Volunteers perform three-hour shifts around high tides from May 20 through July 31, walking or driving along the 2.1 mile road, searching for terrapins in need of assistance. The number of terrapins observed and location of each sighting are recorded on a datasheet to help guide future management.

Attending the training is not required to become a volunteer for this project, but is helpful for volunteers to gain an understanding of what is involved in rescuing terrapins. Pre-registration for the training is encouraged, but not required.

To volunteer to help nesting diamondback terrapins or register for the training, please contact the DNREC Division of Fish & Wildlife's Wildlife Section by contacting Nate Nazdrowicz at 302-735-8688 or by email at nathan.nazdrowicz@delaware.gov. For more information on this project, visit [Operation Terrapin Rescue](#).

Follow the Division of Fish & Wildlife on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/DelawareFishWildlife>.

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